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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of :
Douglas ROBINSON et al :
PCT/EP2003/007541 : PCT Date: July 11, 2003
Serial No.: :
Filed: Concurrently Herewith :
For: SPOUTED...ELECTROWINNING :
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016
January 10, 2005

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Hon. Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

To comply with Rule 56, Applicants are submitting herewith a copy of the International Search Report issued in the PCT application corresponding to the above application as well as copies of the cited art and Form PTO/SB/08A. The second and third references are in the A category or technological background.

As compared to the falling bed cell described in U.S. Patent No. 4,019,968, the cell element of the invention which comprises a draft tube capable of establishing a spouted bed of metallic beads offers several distinct advantages not even remotely suggested by the said patent. Firstly, using an internal draft tube to establish a spouted bed results in a different bead distribution as compared to the falling bed cell of the patent. The twin annuli or single annulus geometry described on page 9 of the present specification allows for a more compact cell design,

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consequently resulting in an improved electrical current transmission within the cathode compartment.

Secondly, it is quite evident when comparing, for example, figure 6 of the present application with the drawings of the patent that using an internal draft tube allows for an easy and simple way to establish a recirculation of metallic beads in the cathode compartment. Evidently, with no external tubes protruding from the individual cells, the external circuitry required for a continuous operation of the cells is considerably reduced as compared to the device described in the patent. Therefore, the cell element of the present invention can easily be laminated to a compact cell stack or cell array for metal electrowinning resulting in an improved and more efficient overall plant side utilization.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 of the present specification, the internal draft tube suggested by the invention can act as a structural reinforcing element improving the mechanical stability of the stacked cells and/or allowing to employ a greater active area without encountering stability problems. It is therefore believed that the claims clearly are not anticipated or obvious from the patent.

Respectfully submitted,
Muserlian, Lucas and Mercanti


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PTO/SB/08A (08-03)

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(Use as many sheets as necessary)

Sheet

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Complete if Known

Application Number	PCT/EP2003/007541
Filing Date	July 11, 2003
First Named Inventor	Robinson et al
Art Unit	
Examiner Name	
Attorney Docket Number	267.183

U. S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Signature		Date Considered	
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